

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
COMFORT SUITES, BISMARCK ND

April 20, 2007
1:00pm

Meeting called to order by Chairman Jenson. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence for POW/MIAs and those serving overseas.

Roll Call:

Present:

Daryl Beard
Carl Bloomquist
Wally Buckingham
Lee Finstad
Jerry Goll

John Hanson
Dave Hilleren
Rudy Jenson
Orletta Kilen

Dean Overby
Lyle Schuchard
Gary Skarphol

Absent:

Jerry Meske

Dave Vandergon

Guests:

Jerry Samuelson (McKenzie County), President, CVSO Association
Mark Landis (Burleigh County), Secretary-Treasurer, CVSO Association
Jerry Balzer
Joe Novak
Tim Nolz, ND Job Service

Motion by Dean Overby to accept January 19 & 20, 2007 meeting minutes, second by Gary Skarphol. Motion passed.

Speakers:

Rob McDivitt, FACHE, VA Medical Center Director

- ▶ Dedication ceremony of Jamestown Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) tonight at 6:00pm
- ▶ Inspection of VA Hospital took place, \$1.2 million to do renovation of mental health area.
- ▶ Dickinson and Williston CBOCs have opened.
- ▶ VA Clinics in Grand Forks and Devils Lake have been discussed.
- ▶ Rosalyn Cole, Associate Director, left for a position in North Carolina.

Maren Daley, Director, Job Service North Dakota

- ▶ Talent Initiative – workforce development for economic development: This is accomplished by expanding, attracting and retaining the workforce in North Dakota.
- ▶ Job Service assess skills and then builds on those skills for individuals to attain better employment opportunities.
- ▶ Job Fairs being held at National Guard and armory facilities.

Mark Landis, Burleigh CVSO

- ▶ VA need based programs do not include public assistance monies as part of an individual's income. Would like the committee to consider excluding these from the grant hardship program income guidelines.
- ▶ Asked the committee to consider raising the income limits for a veteran and his dependents under the grant hardship program.

Workforce Development Council Update - Lyle Schuchard

- ▶ Committee is updating the Governor's five year plan.
- ▶ Veterans now have a priority of service.
- ▶ Questionnaires to CVSOs will help target areas of needed items and/or training.

Tim Nolz, State Veterans Program Administrator, Job Service North Dakota
May 26th – veteran in Steele, ND will launch a rocket that has been signed by veterans from throughout the state. People are encouraged to attend the event.

Bonus Bill & Appeal Process – Lyle Schuchard

Discussion on the inequities contained in the bill concerning payment of the bonus. Has not heard of an appeals process yet.

Kelly Schmidt, ND State Treasurer [HANDOUT]

- ▶ Investments have been doing well.

Discussion continued on Bonus bill and options available for any further legislative work.

Update on availability of lettering on the vans in the transportation program. Wally Buckingham and the Commissioner will continue to work on this.

Department of Veterans Affairs Report – Bob Hanson, Commissioner [HANDOUT]
Overview of legislation affecting veterans. HB 1007 – Veterans Home & Department of Veterans Affairs Budgets. Women's Veterans Coordinator position funded in the Department's budget along with two one-time projects.

Entered into agreement with VA on the Seamless Transition Program. This is to assist severely injured veterans returning to their home state. Tom Summers has been designated as our state's contact.

Collection accounts total around \$144,000. The Department is trying to secure a contract with another collector.

CVSO Training Conference held April 16-17-18, 2007 in Bismarck. One of the speakers is a national Women's Veteran Coordinator. She is willing to assist our office in developing a program.

Other activities the department is involved in: participating in Job Fairs; working with WWII Honor Flight and ISPAC activities.

Motion by Dean Overby to give the Commissioner's office the authority to get lettering put on the transportation vans, second by Carl Bloomquist. Friendly amendment accepted for cost of \$100 per vehicle plus set-up cost. Motion passed.

Recessed for subcommittee meetings.

Committee reconvened.

MG David Sprynczynatyk, Adjutant General, ND Nat'l Guard [HANDOUT]

- ▶ Tuition assistance program expanded.; trade schools and two year schools will be added.
- ▶ Bonus – to include all members of the North Dakota guard who were deployed. Appeals go to the Adjutant General for reconsideration.
- ▶ Received funding for two social workers.
- ▶ Child custody bill passed. Any custody agreement in place at time of deployment will remain in effect during deployment.

► Freedom Salute Ceremony – recognizes guard member, their family and the employer.

Recessed for subcommittee meetings.

April 21, 2007 8:30am

Committee reconvened.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Jenson. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence for POW/MIAs and those serving overseas.

Roll Call:

Present:

Daryl Beard
Carl Bloomquist
Wally Buckingham
Lee Finstad
Jerry Goll

John Hanson
Dave Hilleren
Rudy Jenson
Orletta Kilen

Jerry Meske
Dean Overby
Lyle Schuchard
Gary Skarphol

Absent:

Dave Vandergon

Presentation to Chairman Jenson for his work on the Administrative Committee and his service to the veterans of North Dakota.

Presentation to Lyle Schuchard for his work as Secretary on the Administrative Committee.

Jerry Meske reported that a Bismarck StandDown is being planned for September 13, 2007. Larry Fleckenstein introduced as chair of the StandDown committee.

Veterans Home Governing Board – Norris Braaten, Chairman

Spoke on the legislative session and how the Veterans Home was successful in getting the funding and additional beds needed for a new Veterans Home. The Home will have a total of 150 beds. Funding provided in the upcoming biennium will address the life safety issues and make it possible for security personnel to be hired.

There may be an opportunity for a VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic to be placed adjacent to the Veterans Home in a few years.

Subcommittee on Department of Veterans Affairs – Gary Skarphol, Chairman
Six month evaluation done on Commissioner. Mediation service provided by the state will be brought into the department to help resolve issues. Guardianship proposal referred to Commissioner's office for further information and study. Due to liability issues, the Commissioner is authorized to use state fleet vehicles. Out of state travel requests for Tom Sumers and Gene Kouba were approved. Grant income guidelines were reviewed.

Motion by Carl Bloomquist to increase the income guidelines for the hardship grant program, second by John Hanson. Motion passed. [MOTION #1]

Income maximums:

<i>Veteran</i>	<i>\$1,200</i>
<i>Veteran + 1</i>	<i>\$1,400</i>
<i>Veteran + 2</i>	<i>\$1,600</i>
<i>Veteran + 3</i>	<i>\$1,900</i>
<i>Veteran + 4</i>	<i>\$2,100</i>

Motion by Dean Overby to approve the out-of-state requests of Tom Sumers and Gene Kouba, second by Jerry Meske. Motion passed. [MOTION #2]

Motion by Wally Buckingham to authorize the Commissioner to use a state fleet vehicle for a month at a time, second by Dean Overby. Motion passed. [MOTION #3]

Guidelines for multiple loans will be brought back to the committee for approval. Other uses for Postwar Trust Fund dollars were discussed. The Department will get more information on the proposals for the next committee meeting. These proposals were for an adaptability grant, clothing grant, deposit assistance, and scholarship monies.

Jerry Meske spoke on a small committee being formed to look into providing assistance for veterans in the employment area.

Department asked to look into the possibility of adding dependent children to the grant program.

Jerry Meske brought up the idea of having the Commissioner located in Bismarck on a part-time basis.

Motion by Daryl Beard to approve subcommittee report, second by Orletta Kilen. Motion passed.

Postwar Trust Fund Committee – Wally Buckingham
Recommendations of committee presented.

Motion by Wally Buckingham to obligate \$5,000 for the 2007 Bismarck StandDown, second by Daryl Beard. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Wally Buckingham to roll-over the Department's remaining Postwar Trust Fund monies into July, second by Dean Overby. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Wally Buckingham to accept committee report, second by Orletta Kilen. Motion passed.

Legislative Committee – Lee Finstad

Letter to be drafted for an Attorney General opinion concerning the bonus and the different way the law treats ND National Guard troops and regular Army troops. The bonus should apply equally to both if there is a law to provide it to one. The bonus could be a violation of the equal protection laws against a form of discrimination.

Motion by Dave Hilleren to accept report, second by Wally Buckingham. Motion passed.

Appeals Committee – Dean Overby

Appeal heard on Friday, April 20 at the Bismarck Branch Office. The committee overturned the decision based on additional information. Applicant will now receive a veterans aid loan.

Motion by Gary Skarphol to accept committee report, second by Lee Finstad. Motion passed.

Next meeting:

July 13 & 14, 2007 at Medora or Lisbon.

Commissioner asked to look into the scheduling of VA appointments and how that is impacting the transportation vans.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Lyle Schuchard
Secretary